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SONIC
THE HEDGEHOG
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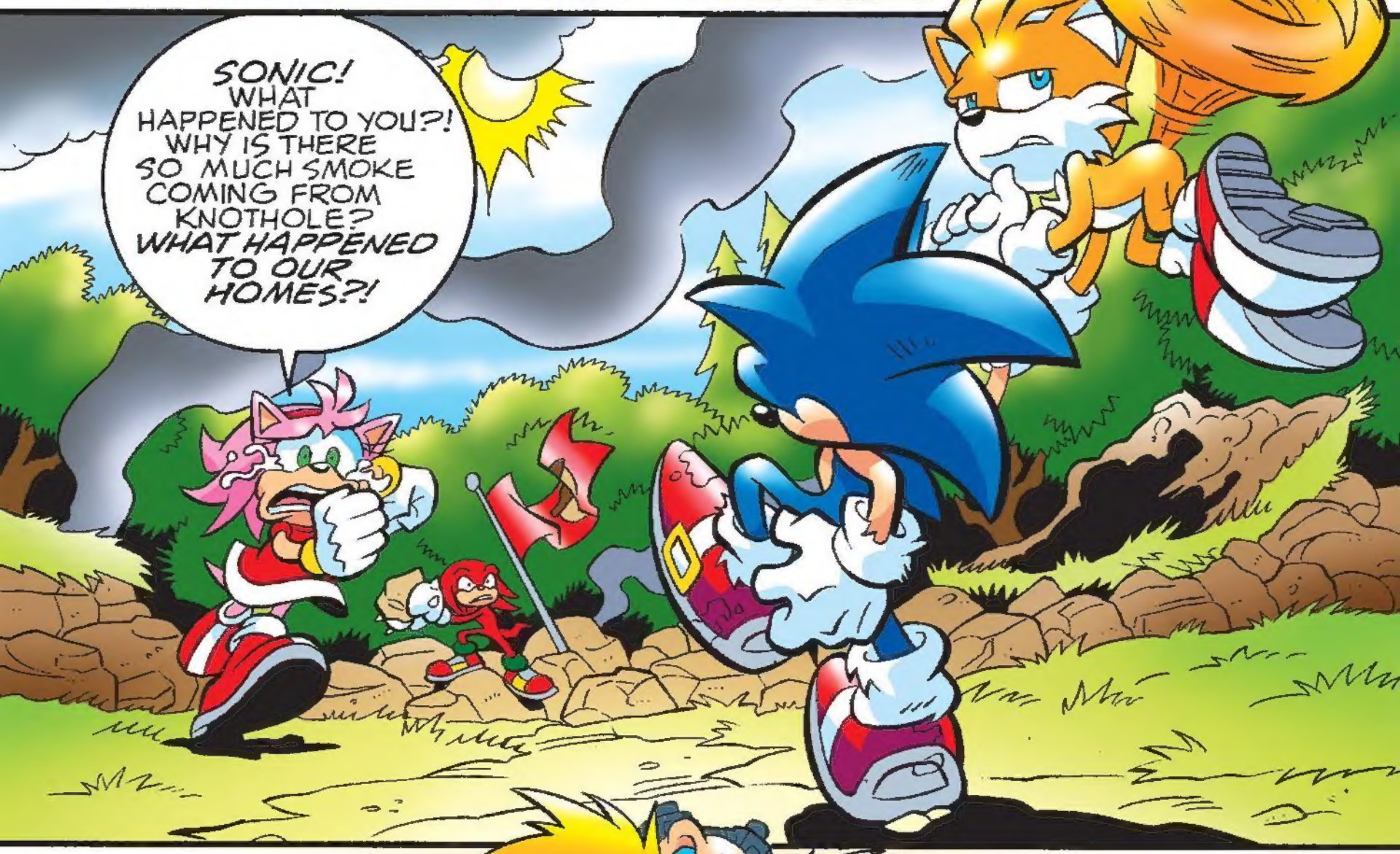
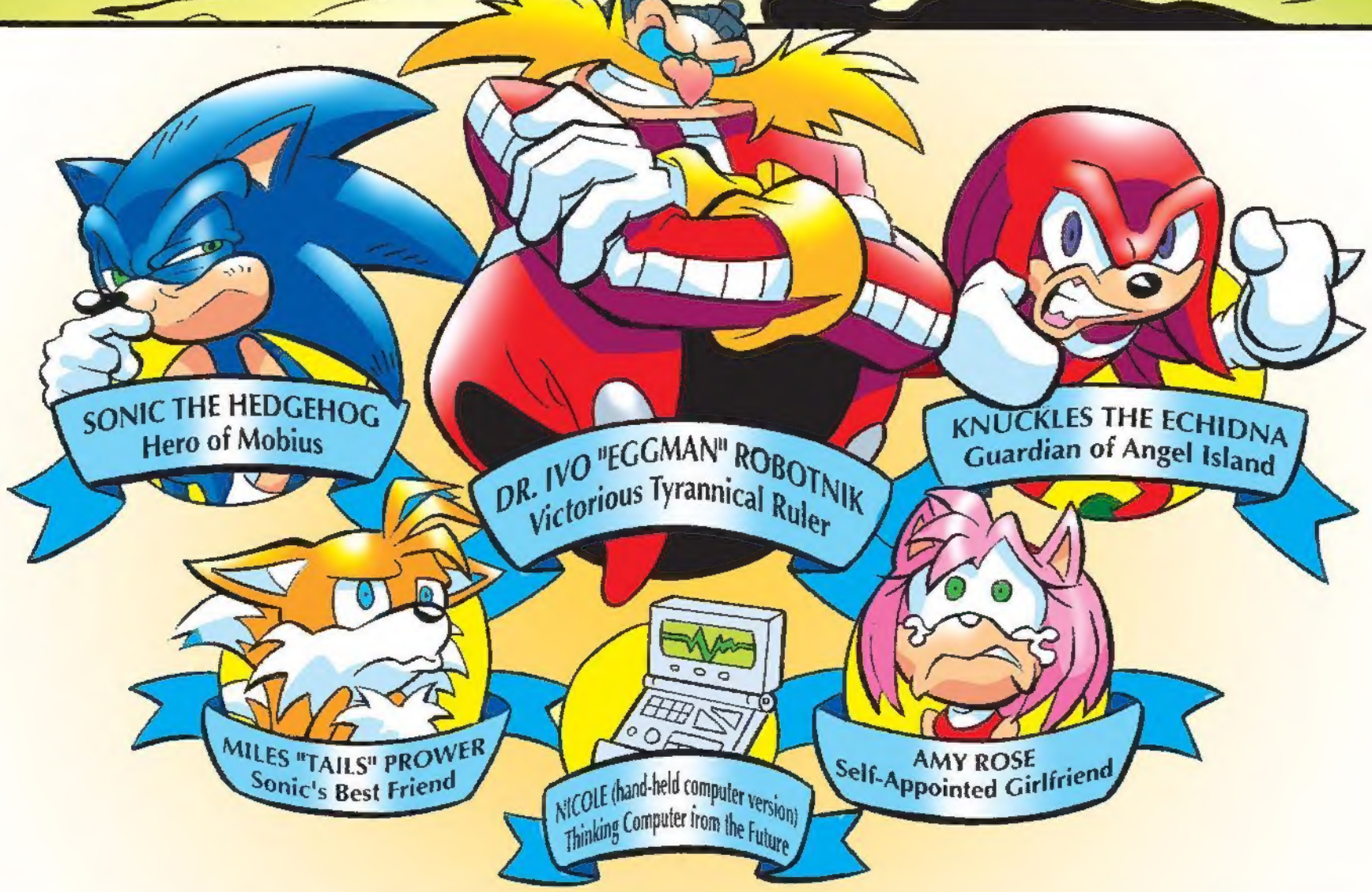
CRACKING THE EMPIRE





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KNOTHOLE IS *GONE*, AMY. THE EGG FLEET BURNED IT TO THE GROUND.

NO!!! WHAT ABOUT EVERY-ONE ELSE?!

CAPTURED. EGGMAN ZAPPED THEM ALL INTO HIS EGG GRAPES.

WHAT EGG GRAPES? WHAT DOES THAT MEAN?

THEY'RE PRISON PODS THAT TURN LIFE-FORCE INTO FUEL, OR SOMETHING. I WAS KINDA BUSY BEING BEATEN UP TO CATCH ALL OF EGGMAN'S RANTING.

SO WHAT ARE WE GOING TO DO?

YOU GUYS CAN START FIXING UP FREEDOM HQ. I'M GOING TO TAKE WHAT I CAN FROM THE LAB AND GET OUR FAMILIES AND FRIENDS BACK.

YOU CAN'T GO AFTER THEM ALONE! GIVE ME A MINUTE TO BUILD SOMETHING OR...

YOU'LL ALL BE SAFER HERE. I'LL GET THEM BACK. DON'T WORRY.

YOU'LL HAVE TO DEAL WITH THE EGG FLEET *PLUS* ALL OF HIS BADNIK ARMY, NOT TO MENTION HIS SUPER BATTLE SUIT!

TAILS! ...I'VE *GOT* THIS!

LIKE YOU *HAD* KNOTHOLE A FEW MINUTES AGO? *YEAH*, YOU *REALLY* HELPED A LOT THERE! OR DOES YOUR *PLAN* HINGE ON YOU GETTING YOUR *BUTT KICKED AGAIN?!*

IF I MAY INTERRUPT ...I RECOMMEND WE POSTPONE THE IN-FIGHTING UNTIL AFTER THE RESCUE MISSION. IF ANYONE IS INTER-ESTED, I HAVE A PLAN.

LADIES, GENTLEMEN, AND MOBIANS OF ALL AGES!

Egg vineyard

I WANT TO THANK YOU ALL FOR PROVIDING ME WITH SUCH AN *ENTERTAINING* RESISTANCE MOVEMENT FOR SO VERY LONG. IT'S MADE RUNNING MY *GLOBAL EMPIRE* SO MUCH MORE EXCITING AND ENJOYABLE.

YOU *FREEDOM FIGHTERS* HAVE BEEN THE MOST AMUSING, BUT ALSO THE MOST ANNOYING. IT ALL WORKED OUT FOR US, THOUGH... YOU WERE ALL READY TO GIVE YOUR LIVES FOR YOUR CAUSE.

...AND I'VE ALWAYS BEEN WILLING TO TAKE THEM! YOU *CHAOTIX* KNEW THAT ALL ALONG. WHICH IS WHY YOU'RE ALL THE MORE *STUPID* FOR AIDING THE MONARCHY.

SPEAKING OF WHICH, LOOK HOW THE MIGHTY HOUSE OF ACORN HAS FALLEN! YOU LOOK TERRIBLE, MAXIMILLIAN. AND YOU LET YOUR INEXPERIENCED *FIRST BORN* TAKE THE CROWN?

IN ALL MY YEARS OF WARRING WITH YOUR FAMILY, I'VE NEVER COME ACROSS A KING AS WEAK AS YOU.

DON'T LISTEN TO HIM, ELIAS! I MARRIED YOU FOR YOUR STRENGTH AND BRAVERY!

HA HAHA! HOW TOUCHING!

NOW, THEN... I'M GOING TO DEMONSTRATE TO YOU ALL JUST WHAT THESE EGG GRAPES CAN DO. THE PROCESS WILL BE ACCELERATED, BUT NOT LESS POTENT--

--JUST TO MAKE SURE YOU'RE ALL GOOD AND TERRIFIED BEFORE THE END!

CHARMY!

I--IT'LL BE OKAY, SAFFRON.

CHARMY BEE! HAVEN'T I ALREADY RUINED YOUR LIFE? DESTROYED YOUR KINGDOM OR SOME SUCH--RIGHT?

YES. YOU HAVE.

DESPITE ALL THAT, I'VE FOUGHT FOR OUR WORLD. NO MATTER WHAT YOU DO TO ME, I WILL *STILL* FIGHT FOR MOBIUS. *AND I'M NOT ALONE!*

Egg Vineyard

BRAVE LAST WORDS.

SNIVELY!

WITH PLEASURE, SIR.

DON'T START THE PARTY WITHOUT US, ROBOTNIK! WE... WHAT'S THAT LIGHT?

CHARMY!

NO! I CAN'T BE TOO LATE AGAIN!

NICOLE?

I'M READING A PORT ACCESS UP TOP. PLUG ME IN THERE. HURRY!

I'VE GOT CHARMY!

EVERYONE STICK TO THE PLAN! AMY! KNUCKLES! BUST EVERY-ONE OUT!

SMASH

SMASH

NO! YOU'RE SUPPOSED TO BE BEATEN!... YOUR SPIRIT BROKEN!

SHOWS HOW SMART YOU ARE.

SMASH!

I'M GOING TO MAKE SURE CHARMY IS OKAY. YOU GET THAT MUCH OF A HEAD START, EGGMAN.

YOU SAID YOU'D CAUGHT THEM ALL! YOU MISSED THREE!

THREE OF HOW MANY HUNDRED ?!

SHUT UP AND RUN!

UNF!

HOW DOES IT LOOK, NICOLE?

WITHOUT A.D.A.M.,* DR. ROBOTNIK'S SYSTEMS ARE WIDE OPEN. I'LL ONLY NEED A MINUTE.

*DR. EGGMAN'S A.I. "SON" AND OPERATING SYSTEM/ VIRUS WAS DESTROYED IN STH #169.

DOCTOR QUACK...?

I DON'T HAVE ANY OF MY TOOLS, SAFFRON...

...BUT HE SEEMS STABLE. IT LOOKS LIKE SONIC GOT TO HIM JUST IN TIME.

WE DID IT!

SONIC! ARE YOU ALL RIGHT?

HEY, SALLY, I'M HANGIN' IN THERE!

GOOD, BECAUSE WE HAVE TO MOVE. EVERYONE, LET'S GO!

WE HAVE TO GO, NICOLE.

I'VE DONE ALL I CAN DO HERE. I'LL FINISH PREPARATIONS BACK AT HOME.

HOME...?

I'M SORRY, THERE'S NO TIME TO EXPLAIN. STAY WITH THE GROUP, TAILS.

IF YOU SAY SO. I HOPE YOUR PLAN WORKS...

THIS WAY, EVERYBODY! RIGHT BACK THE WAY WE CAME IN!

THERE'RE TOO MANY OF US...TOO CROWDED. MAYBE IF WE PUT AS MANY AS WE CAN ON THAT SAUCER...THE FREEDOM FIGHTERS AND CHAOTIX ...AND HOLD OFF ANY--

NOPE.

"NOPE"?!

WE'VE GOT A PLAN, SAL. WE STICK TOGETHER.

WHILE IT MAY USUALLY WORK FOR YOU, "*RUN AWAY AS FAST AS YOU CAN*" IS ***NOT*** A PLAN.

DID I SAY IT WAS ***MY*** PLAN?

NICOLE SAYS SHE'S DONE ALL SHE CAN HERE. I GUESS WE'RE READY FOR THE NEXT PART OF HER PLAN.

NICOLE CAME UP WITH THE PLAN?

WAY TO GO, TAILS!

EVERYONE! STICK TOGETHER!

DUDE, ABOUT EARLIER...

...OH... ...NO...

YEAH, SONIC, I...

HOLD THAT THOUGHT...

WAS ***THIS*** PART OF THE PLAN, TOO?

BELIEVE IT OR NOT.

I TOLD YOU THE GAME WAS OVER, SONIC. NOW GET BACK IN THOSE EGG GRAPES!

EVERYONE BACK! TAKE THE FIRST ALLEY TO THE RIGHT! MOVE!

KZZT!

HE'S USING A LARGER SPREAD ON HIS TELE-PORTER BEAM! WE'LL ALL BE RECAPTURED IN NO TIME!

KZZT!

WAIT FOR IT!

UM... SIR?

KZZT!

NOT NOW, SNIVELY.

I'VE ALREADY RECAPTURED MOST OF THEM...

KZZT!

...AND THE REST ARE TRAPPED AT A DEAD END!

BUT SIR! THE TELEPORTING BEAM IS...

OBVIOUSLY WORKING! NOW SHUT UP AND LET ME SAVOR THIS MOMENT!

CAN YOU SPIN DASH THROUGH THIS WALL? MAYBE GET US A WAY OUT?

PROBABLY, BUT NOT THIS TIME.

HAVE YOU LOST YOUR MIND?!

NO, BUT I CAN'T EXPLAIN RIGHT NOW. I DON'T WANT ROBOTNIK TO OVERHEAR AND SPOIL THE SURPRISE.

KZZT!

SONIC--!

THIS IS A FIRST FOR YOU, RODENT! TWO COLOSSAL FAILURES IN ONE DAY! WON'T YOU PUT UP A FUTILE FIGHT FOR OLD TIME'S SAKE?

AND GIVE YOU THE PLEASURE? NOT LIKELY, CHUBS.

FINE, THEN. JOIN YOUR FRIENDS IN *OBLIVION!*

KZZT!

SEE YA ON THE FLIP SIDE, *LOSER.*

FINALLY I WON! SNIVELY, DON'T START THE EGG GRAPES UNTIL I'M THERE!

BUT, *SIR!*

I'VE BEEN TRYING TO TELL YOU THE ENTIRE TIME! *THE TELEPORTATION FREQUENCY WAS TAMPERED WITH! THERE'S NOBODY IN THE RESERVE EGG GRAPES!*

I'M REMOTE-LAUNCHING THE EGG FLEET NOW! TRACK DOWN THAT FREQUENCY AND *TELL ME WHERE THEY ARE!*

I'VE GOT IT, SIR! I'M ON MY WAY TO MY FLAG-SHIP.

WELL, WHERE ARE THEY?!

IT LOOKS LIKE... THE NANITE CITY?!

SHE DID IT! SHE REBUILT THE LAKE OF RINGS!

BUT WILL IT STILL PRODUCE THE MAGIC RINGS, I WONDER?

ALL OF OUR HOMES...

ZEY HAVE BEEN REBUILTED!

HEH. JUST "REBUILT," ANTOINE.

FATHER! LOOK--!

BY THE GLORY OF THE SOURCE...

CASTLE ACORN! AS IT WAS IN THE DAYS OF OUR LONG-LOST MOBOTROPOLIS!

THAT WAS WHAT I INTENDED, YOUR HIGHNESS.

...WHOA...

THIS WAS SOMETHING I'VE BEEN PREPARING FOR QUITE A WHILE NOW. DOCTOR ROBOTNIK'S EFFORTS HAVE FORCED ME TO REVEAL THIS BEFORE I WAS FINISHED, BUT ALL THE SAME...WELCOME TO NEW MOBOTROPOLIS! I WILL BE YOUR HOSTESS... NICOLE.

NICOLE! I DIDN'T THINK YOU COULD MAINTAIN THAT FORM.

I COULD NOT UNTIL I FOUND *SOMETHING* ROBUST ENOUGH TO MAINTAIN ME. I BUILT ENOUGH HOLOGRAPHIC MATRIXES TO GIVE ME FULL USE OF THE CITY.

GOOD TO HAVE YOU WITH US-- AGAIN.

DOES THE LAKE OF RINGS REALLY WORK?

HOW DO YOU HAVE THE POWER TO SUPPORT A PHYSICAL FORM?

IS IT JUST LIKE OLD MOBOTROPOLIS?

WHAT ARE OUR DEFENSES HERE?

I'LL ANSWER EVERYTHING IN TIME, I PROMISE!

YOU'VE ALREADY DONE A GREAT DEAL FOR US, NICOLE.

AND ALL OF YOU, AS WELL. WITHOUT YOU, NONE OF US WOULD'VE MADE IT TO SEE NICOLE'S BEAUTIFUL NEW CITY.

DO NOT CONGRATULATE...

...ALL OF OUR ACHIEVEMENTS JUST YET, PRINCESS. IT DID NOT TAKE DR. ROBOTNIK LONG TO FIGURE OUT WHAT WE DID...

...AND HE HAS COME TO FINISH WHAT HE STARTED.

RIGHT WHEN YOU THOUGHT WE WERE GOING TO GET A HAPPY ENDING! COME BACK IN THIRTY TO SEE IF *SONIC & CO.* WILL EVER ENJOY THEIR

"HOME, NEW HOME!"

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